

Scoville, Herbert
 York, Robert
 Rodberg, Leonard S.
 Missile Madness
 Race to Oblivion

BOOKS

Task for Survival

MISSILE MADNESS

Herbert Scoville; Illustrations by Robert Osborn
 (Houghton Mifflin, 77 pp., \$4.95)

RACE TO OBLIVION

A Participant's View of the Arms Race

Herbert York

(Simon & Schuster, 256 pp., \$6.95)

Reviewed by Leonard S. Rodberg

The reviewer is a former official of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He is now a Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies.

The authors of these two works were both intimately involved in the development of nuclear weapons, York as director of the AEC's Livermore Laboratory, and Scoville as director of the Defense Department's weapons test program. They are exceptional men. By the mid-60s, they had become deeply committed to the need for international control of nuclear weapons and had shifted their institutional affiliation to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

They also share the same, suggestive given name, derived from the Teutonic for "shining warriors." These "soldiers who have seen the light" have each written primers for the citizen on the arms race in which they were leading participants. And their humanity and gentleness show in their writing.

Scoville's work, devastatingly illustrated by Robert Osborn, presents in crisp and concise fashion the up-to-date facts of nuclear war. He shows that security will be found, not through ABM, MIRV, FOBS, and the other acronymic marvels of this mad technology, but only through unilateral acts and international understandings that halt the addition of further weapons to an already monstrous arsenal.

York reaches the same conclusion, by tracing his own experience from the Manhattan Project, the post-war weapons buildup, the

near-panic reaction to Sputnik, and the methodical, if equally mad, buildup of the McNamara years. He stresses what he calls the two "ultimate absurdities," that our security is steadily decreasing even as our military power multiplies, and that the power to decide that this arsenal should be unleashed is passing from human beings to machines. He warns, in short, that we may be destroying democracy in order to save it.

And yet one is left wondering what is the point of books like this. Information alone will not change the situation; surely, by now, every literate American knows the danger we face. And the authors use the mildest of terms to describe the mightiest machine for mass murder the world has ever seen. They display neither the anger, the sense of betrayal, nor the degree of personal involvement that are necessary if sufficient political power is to develop to turn this machine around.

York describes how this country has, time after time, provided the fuel for a new spurt in the arms race, showing that "over the last 30 years we have repeatedly taken unilateral actions that have unnecessarily accelerated the race." Starting with the atomic bomb project in World War II, our defense

projection.

The result, of course is a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which we build a weapon and the Soviet Union follows suit shortly thereafter. And we are still hearing the same refrain from the leaders of our military establishment, urging yet another spurt in spending for weapons, lest we "fall behind." In this way we continue adding to an arsenal which, even 20 years ago (before the advent of the H-bomb) could reproduce World War II in a single day, and which today can hit Russian Hiroshimas with bombs a hundred or a thousand times more devastating than the one that struck that unfortunate city.

York suggests that the higher one rises in the military bureaucracy the more clearly he sees the limited utility of military power and the necessity for seeking security through other means. Those who are enmeshed in the bureaucracy are blinded to the absurdity and horror of the situation their own acts are creating. It is thus left to the civilian leadership to introduce a sane perspective and to impose restraints on the bureaucracy.

But is this enough? During the past quarter-century, America's leaders have sought not to limit our military power but to use it to achieve American dominance. If they wanted to shift course their power would be severely limited, when confronted with an entrenched, heavily-funded bureaucracy with long experience at political inighting. York claims we are dealing with "errors committed by sincere men acting in good faith," and yet these acts have always led in the same direction — toward greater defense spending, more arms, and less ultimate security.

Clearly, the problem lies within the very institutions we created to provide us with arms, and we will solve it only when these institutions have been reduced in size and reshaped to permit effective control by civilians—including espe-

cially the Congress—and re-directed toward sane and constructive ends.

Both authors only hint at the task that faces us in the coming years, in undoing the work of a generation that created this military juggernaut. They make clear the danger to our physical survival and to the survival of democracy, in our present course, but leave, as an "exercise for the reader," the construction of a strategy that will preserve both security and democracy. It is to that task that a new generation must give its energy and commitment.